

November 23, 2020

“Backroads of Montana” Presents Hidden Treasures in New Episode on December 5

A new episode of the awarding-winning MontanaPBS travelogue “Backroads of Montana” will premiere at 5:45 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5.

“We head to some real out-of-the-way spots on this program,” host and Montana native William Marcus said. “Viewers should really enjoy the trek across the state.”

Viewers will meet a Fort Benton mother and daughter who are teaming up to spread random acts of kindness. Tracy Larson and her daughter Olivia are painting rocks with positive and uplifting messages. They hide the rocks around town for people to find and brighten their day. The idea is catching on for people of all ages.

Then producers follow Milwaukee Railroad Historical Association historian John Shontz and U.S. Forest Service archaeologist Erika Karuzas as they search for the long-forgotten Taft Cemetery. For a brief period, the northwestern Montana railroad town of Taft was a confluence of madams, murder and mayhem, earning it the title “The Wickedest City in America.”

It’s known as “The Pink Church” off Highway 2 near Harlem. “Backroads” producers make a stop to show off the unique Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Montana’s Highline.

A father and son with a passion for gem-cutting search for Montana sapphires near Helena. The duo paid for their own private mine run, paying operators to run dozens of yards of gravel through a jig to separate out the sapphires and other gemstones. What will they find in their load of pay dirt?

Smokestack State Park, the Washoe Theatre and the Montana Hotel are just some of the stops in Anaconda. Marcus will take viewers on a tour of the historic city.

“Backroads of Montana” is produced by Gus Chambers, John Twiggs, Ray Ekness and Marcus. “Hidden Treasures” will air as part of a special MontanaPBS pledge edition. At 5 p.m., “Backroads: Rich with Tradition” will offer stories from Fortine, Manhattan, Glasgow, Virginia City and Ravalli. Marcus and Twiggs will tell stories from the road. To view episode details and photos, visit www.montanapbs.org/hiddentreasures.

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